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FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNAL.

Defence of Forms of Prayer.

THE pious soul, accustomed to exercise his devout affections by the means of evangelical formularies of devotion, is often disturbed with the bitter severities of the enemies of forms of prayer.

Though his heart may approve of devotional forms, he has not always at hand the Scriptural arguments by which this mode of worshipping God is defended.

In discoursing on the subject of devotional forms, I will lay down three propositions, and support them by proofs.

I. That forms of prayer are lawful.

II. That forms of prayer are expedient.

III. That the condemnation of them is unchristian, and grossly wicked.

First Proposition—That forms of prayer are lawful. That must be acknowledged as lawful, as a Christian exercise, which has the example of Christ to plead for it; and we can never walk more safely than *when we walk as our Divine Master walked.*

Our blessed Saviour having determined to give his human body as an expiation for sin, and, by this sacrifice, to *bear our sins in his own body on the tree*, prepared himself for this wonderful act of humiliation. He had eaten his last passover with his chosen disciples, and then taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, *he said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me; and he went a little farther and prayed;* then returning to his disciples, and finding them asleep, he admonished

them, and went away again the second time and prayed; and came and found them asleep again, and he left them, and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Whoever will consider the character of Christ, the occasion that called forth the ardent expression of his pious devotion, and the manner in which it was performed, will see and acknowledge the force of his example as proof of our first proposition, that forms of prayer are lawful.

If any occasion could require variety of expression, if ardency of feeling would necessarily prompt it, if sincere devotion demanded it, would not Jesus have known and practised it?

Have we not in this example of our blessed Saviour both an argument for defence and a rule for the practice of forms of devotion? Had we no other proof, would not this alone be sufficient to put to silence the enemies of forms of prayer?

But we have other proofs: for our Saviour and John the Baptist both taught their disciples a form of prayer: for the disciples of Christ said to their Master, *Teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.* See St. Luke xi. 1—4.

Is it sufficient to prove, that we cannot pray acceptably in the words of our Saviour, to say that St. Matthew records this differently?

I know that our translation renders the passage in St. Matthew, *after this manner, therefore, pray ye.* The Greek word, rendered after this manner, is *Οὕτως*, which literally denotes *thus*; which is enough to prove, that the translation is too free to build an

argument upon in opposition to the express language of our Saviour, as recorded by St. Luke.

This not only proves that this was a form, but it shows also the propriety of using it, not only as a pattern, but as a form the most full and comprehensive; and so adapted to all occasions, that the omission of it appears something like a contempt of the command of God: and the substitution of human language for divine bears strong marks of pride and arrogance. Therefore, however excellent other prayers may be, the omission of this causes a chasm which a pious soul feels cannot be supplied by any of human invention.

Having thus proved that forms of prayer are lawful, I proceed to the *second Proposition*—That forms of prayer are expedient.

When we meet together for the solemn worship of Almighty God, the greatest object of our meeting is, to supplicate pardon, mercy, and grace for ourselves, the Christian family, and the world.

Social worship must be joint worship, or that in which pious souls can conscientiously and devoutly join.

To know what this is to be, both as to sentiment and expression, gives the devout worshipper a good opportunity to lay open his heart to the influence of holy affections, and ardent desires to the Father of mercies.

If we were to admit that extempore prayers were always correct in sentiment and in language, their very novelty would engage so much of our attention, as to leave little room for the exercise of pious affections. And is it not a fact, that we hear them with much the same sensation that we do a sermon? Do they generally contain so full an expression of our wants, and those of our Christian brethren? and are they so adapted to the state of every sort and condition of men, as such as have been composed by a number of wise and good men, that have for ages been means of nourishment and strength for pious and devout souls?

All men who lead the public devotions of congregations, are not correct

in sentiment, evangelical in doctrine, and learned and prudent in their language and expression.

Public prayers partake of some shades of the peculiarity of the doctrines which men profess; and if we join with all, with Lutherans and Calvinists, Armenians and Socinians, we are in danger of offering incongruous, and not unfrequently absurd, petitions to Almighty God.

To remedy all these evils, to regulate the devotion of ministers and people, is it not a dictate of sober reason, harmonizing with the practice of our blessed Saviour and his holy apostles, to collect from the pious prayers and supplications of primitive and evangelical Christians, such means of public devotional exercises as are sanctioned by the word of God, and best calculated to impress our minds with reverence, solemnity, and devotion; in other words, to take such prayers as have been selected by the pious martyrs of the Church to which we belong, contained in our evangelical liturgy, a composition for the exercises of the devout soul, that, amidst the various revolutions of the Christian world, has stood the assaults of infidelity, schism, and heresy, and, pure as unalloyed gold, shines with greater brightness the more carefully and minutely it is examined?

Having thus proved the expediency of forms of prayer, I proceed to the *third Proposition*—That the condemnation of them is unchristian and grossly wicked.

To condemn the practice of Jesus Christ, is to condemn Jesus Christ himself. Jesus Christ prayed by a form when he *went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words*. To condemn a form of prayer then, is to condemn Jesus Christ. Is not such a practice unchristian? Is it not grossly wicked? Who that has any devout exercises of soul, will be guilty of such a sin?

Can enthusiasm and bigotry so darken and brutalize the soul, as to make it susceptible of a crime at which decency is shocked, and piety shudders? O God, forgive such offenders, for they know not what they do!

But, what is their apology? They say that we must pray with the spirit and with the understanding. And did not Jesus Christ pray with the spirit and with the understanding, when, in his agony in the garden, in a form of words, he supplicated strength, and submitted to the Divine will?

The same apostle who teaches us to pray and to sing with the spirit and the understanding, forbids not the use of forms.

Who does not think it proper to sing by a form and with a book too?

Does he condemn a form of prayer as sinful, as lifeless and dull, who professes the exercise of animated devotion, in singing forms of prayer and praise to God?

Does not the Christian who sings prayers to God from a book, condemn himself, when he condemns the Christian for using a book in reading his prayers? Psalms and hymns are full of prayers; and is the nature of them changed by their metre, or the intonation of voice? How often does the enthusiast condemn that in others which he unblushingly practises himself?

I complain of no mode of expressing the devotion of heart to God. The heart must pray, the heart must praise, to have either prayer or praise acceptable. He then who condemns forms of prayer as sinful, and uses them in psalms and hymns, condemns his own practice, and thus proves his own inconsistency. But more awful must his sin be than language can express, who, by this condemnation, enters his condemnation against the practice of Christ, and, of course, passes sentence upon Christ himself. Let such characters weigh this subject; and, laying their hand upon their hearts, ask themselves if, by their conduct, they have not dishonoured Christ?

If any such read this, let them supplicate of Christ pardon for this sin, and put away for the future all such bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking.

We conclude, then, by observing, that, so far as we can learn any thing from the practice of our Saviour, forms of devotion are lawful; from

principles of reason that we think sound and substantial, we prove them expedient; and if we know any thing of the nature of sin, those who condemn such forms as are evangelical, condemn the practice of Jesus Christ, and thus pronounce sentence upon Christ himself.

Extract from a Sermon delivered in several Churches and Chapels of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the City of New-York, for the benefit of the New-York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society. By the Rev. THOMAS LYELL, A. M. Rector of Christ Church, New-York.

Men of Israel, help. Acts xxi. 28.

"THE Bible, my Brethren! this is our refuge and strong tower in time of distress; our sun to enlighten; our shield to protect. Thus the primitive fathers thought, and thus they wrote; for Ireneus, writing of the Valentinian heretics, says, 'All these errors they fall into, because they know not the Scriptures.' And so St. Jerome, 'We must search the Scriptures with all diligence, that so being good exchangers, we may know the lawful coin from the copper;' and elsewhere, 'That infinite evils arise from ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this cause the greatest part of the heresies proceeded.' St. Chrysostom gives it as his opinion, that 'if men would be conversant with the Scriptures, and attend to them, they would not only not fall into errors themselves, but be able to rescue those that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would instruct men both in right opinions and good life.' Our Church has inherited these sentiments of the Fathers, and has shown their influence in her introduction of such large portions of Holy Scripture into all her services; and in teaching her members to pray that they may 'hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest' the 'Holy Scriptures,' which God hath 'caused to be written for their 'learning.' Both the Fathers and the Church have herein adopted

the sentiments of our Lord, as expressed in his injunction, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me;' and in his rebuke of the gay and licentious Sadducees, 'Ye do err, not the Scriptures, nor the power of God.'

"Thus stood the opinion and practice of those ages of the Church, to which none with more reverence and filial regard, and certainly none with greater pleasure and interest, look back, than Protestant Episcopalians; none of whom, knowing the rock from which we are hewed, and the hole of the pit from which we are digged, are ashamed to say, in the pious and enlightened language of a certain great man, 'In religious concerns I like to go the beaten road, the good old way; where the Scripture is silent the Church is my text; where *that* speaks, it is but the comment, and I never refer any thing to the arbitration of my own judgment but in the silence of both.'

"The change that afterwards ensued, together with the causes which led to it, I have not time, nor is it necessary to state. The shadows of that evening which preceded a long, cold, and dreary night of ignorance and superstition, soon began to gather round the Church. Centuries rolled away, and millions of men calling themselves Christians, passed into eternity without the knowledge of the Bible—without reading, or hearing in their own tongue, a single page of that inestimable volume. But God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, once more said, 'Let there be light.' In the language of his ancient prophet, he said to the Church, 'Thy light is come.' In the midst of this spiritual darkness, while men were sitting in the region of the shadow of death, 'the day spring from on high visited them.' 'The set time to favour Zion had arrived.' An epoch commenced not less remarkable or illustrious than that of the first promulgation of the Gospel; an epoch which will ever be considered by Christians, as a great event in the counsels of Divine wisdom and mercy, to a world lying in darkness. Nor

do we forget, that this most splendid event (the Reformation) was brought about by the means of the Bible. It is irresistibly interesting to read the accounts of those sensations of joy and exultation with which the people at that period hailed the return of the long lost blessing of the word of God, and received it to their bosoms. 'Such was their thirst for the sacred Scriptures, that they went in crowds to the Church to read the Bible, fixed there by the royal command; numbers far advanced in the vale of life, learned to read, that they might read the Bible; and having done so, were ready to say with the pious and devout Simeon, upon taking the infant Saviour in his arms, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Yes, the Reformation, under the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, was effected by the Bible, and the means which restored can alone perpetuate that light in which we walk and rejoice.

"Not help to circulate the Bible? O that we could give it the wings of the morning! The Bible! To what else shall we ascribe it, that we are not at this day involved in the darkness and ignorance of former ages? To what institution—to what system of instruction, of all those which the benevolence and wisdom, the piety and charity of the age have devised and put into operation? And no age ever devised more for the improvement of the mind, or the melioration of the circumstances of man. From among them all select the most excellent; that around which wisdom throws her brightest beams, and in the operation of which, benevolence and charity exercise and gratify their most ardent and expansive wishes—take that one—*take them all together*, and what are they without the Bible? Your Charity Schools, both parochial and public; your Sunday Schools, though last, not least in worth and excellence, whether we consider the tenderness of their care or the wisdom of their plans, what are they, valuable as they are, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness—but the

means and instruments to prepare the way of the Lord for religious instruction? Deprived of the Bible, of its co-operation and impulse, they are impotent as a machine deprived of its spring; their force would soon cease to reach the mass of the people. Take the Bible away, and you strike from those systems of wisdom, instruction, and benevolence, the sun to whose radiance and warmth they owe their splendour and their worth; the natural darkness and corruption of the human heart would soon prevail against them, and those clouds of superstition and barbarism which enveloped former ages, would speedily return, thick and dark, and settle on the most enlightened nations of Christendom.

“ ‘Men of Israel,’ shall we help this Society to distribute the Bible?

“Your answer we will receive, after having detained you a few moments on the subject of the Prayer Book.

“Ought this Society to be aided in their endeavours to circulate the Prayer Book? What claims does this book possess to our patronage and support? We presume not to urge the claim of inspiration, but we do urge, and with great confidence, that of *ancient* if not *apostolic* origin. Spiritually speaking, the Prayer Book contains our mother tongue. It speaks the language of her that bare us—a language which is as exclusively her own, as the language of any nation or people upon earth is exclusively the living language of that people.

“In this language the Church has taught her children, nearly nineteen centuries, to offer their ‘supplications and prayers, and to give thanks for all men.’ A language which, for purity and simplicity, strength and fervour, wisdom and spirituality, carries with it indubitable testimony that it could have been learnt no where but in the apostolic school of primitive Christianity. For the truth of this remark, permit me to ask, In what book of devotion, in what liturgy do you find such unquestionable marks, such decisive proofs of a primitive origin, as in the Book of Common Prayer? In what formulary do you find doctrine so

sound, morality so pure, and piety so spiritual and ardent? Nor is the exhibition of these characters unimportant in the estimation of him who sincerely and earnestly seeks the true fold, and wishes most devoutly to be under the care of that good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. It is, certainly, of no small importance to the serious inquirer, to know, by proofs, the plainness of which he cannot mistake, and the strength of which he cannot withstand, that he is in the fold of him who feedeth his flock like a shepherd, gathers the lambs with his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.

“In a Church which comes down to us, purporting to be the Church built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone; a Church built up of lively stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ—in a Church of such high, holy, and primitive descent and pretensions, we surely have a right to expect, and moreover ought to find ‘some of those precious gems of primitive truth and order,’ which gave lustre and value to her diadem, in the day on which, as a chaste virgin, she was espoused unto Christ, her Head and Lord; some of those abstracts or compendiums of apostolic faith and worship, of truth and holiness, into which, according to his own most gracious promise, the Holy Spirit should, on his descent, guide her. We have a right to expect, and ought to find these things in the possession of a Church which assumes, as ours does, and justly too, to stand on apostolic ground.”

“Admit, my Brethren, that it is possible you should find nothing in the pulpit but cold morality: what then? It would be greatly to be lamented, it must be acknowledged: but will you, therefore, with such a liturgy as you possess, be content with being cold formalists? Having a form of godliness only, can you use a liturgy, and join in a worship which breathe, and, in their very nature,

tend to inspire, the life and power thereof? Suppose the pulpit should, indeed, provide nothing but husks, that it is possible the hungry soul may look up, expecting food from the steward of the Lord's household, who is appointed to give to all their portion of meat in due season, and be disappointed—what then? Is there not in your Father's house bread enough and to spare? Does he not feed you? In the service, do you not find the true bread that came down from heaven, that nourishes unto life eternal? Yes, there the Church finds her feast of marrow and fat things, there she holds her banquet, while the banner of her divine Lord over her is love. There she finds strong consolation, renews her strength, mounts up with wings as eagles, is prepared to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.

"My Brethren, the more the service of the Church is considered, the more surprising it will appear that it is not adopted by all Christians; for 'in what other human instance, at so small an expense to the understanding, have the same depth of thought, the same devotion of feeling, the same compass of moral wisdom been exhibited to the mind and heart, as in our service? To relish the matter of it, is to possess piety; to digest it, is to acquire wisdom; to breathe its spirit, is to be as pure and as perfect as can consist with mortality.' My Brethren, permit me earnestly to plead with you on this occasion. Is there any thing calculated to inspire delight, and to infuse the most sublime emotions into the human bosom, in the thought that every time we join in the public services of our religion, we present our petitions in the very language which, we are fully persuaded, has been successful in bringing down blessings in ten thousand instances? That we offer our praises in anthems which those delighted to use, who have joined, long since, the General Assembly and Church of the first born in Heaven, and are now worshipping before the throne? If there be any thing delightful in contemplations like these, then help to

make others partakers of your joy. If it be impossible to remain insensible to the attractions of a service which has been chanted by the lips of the greatest and best of mankind, the noblest patrons of the cause of humanity and religion, the highest favourites of the King of Heaven; then, by the sensations and pleasures originated by these attractions, I entreat your help. Do our holy and beautiful places where our fathers worshipped, receive a peculiar lustre from the spirits of the just, with whom we are so closely associated, and who yet seem to speak to us through the service, in the pious use of which they, together with the noble army of martyrs, entered triumphantly into glory? Then, by all that is venerable, august, or inviting, in such views as these, I entreat your help this day. Finally, 'Has an interest beyond any example in former ages been excited on the subject of revelation? Has the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures opened the eyes of tens of thousands to the awful realities of the unseen world? Has the general establishment of schools for the education of the poor, and especially the recent establishment of Sunday Schools, broken up the fountain of a mighty deep, the moral consequences of which it is impossible to calculate?' Then let me entreat you, men and brethren, to make provision for the liberal diffusion of the sacred records of our Church; provide, now that you have it in your power, a *deep* and *wide* channel, in which the newly awakened feelings of thousands and tens of thousands may safely flow. Let them know that the sacred services of our Church have confessors and martyrs for their authors, and Christian antiquity for their model; that they have been adopted by the wisest and best of men, and contain the very language which those delighted to use in the courts of the Lord's house on earth, who are now worshipping in the beauty of holiness, in the temple of the great God above.

"Men of Israel, will you help? We wait your answer."

Pastoral Address to the Children of the Parish of Trinity Church, New-Haven, Connecticut, by the Rector.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

YOUR course of catechetical instruction for this season, is now closed; and I embrace the present opportunity to express my approbation of your diligence and attention, and to offer a few remarks for your consideration.

Placed over you as your spiritual pastor and teacher—bound by my ordination vows, and by the rubrics and canons of the Church, to instruct you in the rudiments of Christian knowledge—and charged by the holy Gospel, to watch for your souls as one that must give account—my responsibility is great; and the duties which I owe to you are highly interesting and important. It has afforded me much satisfaction, therefore, to witness the assiduity with which you have generally applied yourselves, and the rapid progress which you have made in your studies.

Little children—you are, by the good providence of God, blessed with great and distinguished privileges. By the sacrament of baptism you have been ingrafted into the Church of Christ. It is a Church which our Lord himself founded; to which the promises of the Gospel are made; in which the Word and sacraments are duly administered; and in which you are to be trained and prepared, through the assistance of Divine grace, for the kingdom of heaven. But you will reflect, that all these privileges can avail you nothing, if they be not properly improved. Young as you now are, you have your duties to perform, and your obligations to discharge. Even little children are bound to keep all the commandments of God, which are applicable to their state. To love and adore the Supreme Being; to worship him, not only in the public service of his Church, but in secret prayer; to love, honour, and obey their parents; to abstain from all the vices which are forbidden, and particularly from profane swearing, falsehood, and dishonesty; are all duties which the

youngest, no less than the oldest, are bound to perform.

Go on faithfully, then, my dear children, in these duties. Attend diligently to your catechetical studies. Never absent yourselves unnecessarily from Church. Be constant and regular in your private devotions. Never neglect your prayers when you retire to rest at night, nor when you rise in the morning. Remember that you depend on your heavenly Father for protection, at all times, and in all places, and especially in the unguarded hours of repose; and that you are indebted to him for all the necessities and comforts of life, and for life itself. Remember also, that when you pray in secret, he who seeth in secret will reward you openly. Be dutiful to your parents. Think how much care and labour they have bestowed upon you in your helpless years! how much anxiety and solicitude they must feel for your welfare! and how solemnly, when they presented you at the baptismal font, they devoted you to the service of God. Be careful that you do not render all their labour and attention vain and unprofitable, by your carelessness and negligence; and, above all, be careful that you do not violate the vows and promises which they made in your behalf, at your baptism. Beware that you never indulge in those dreadful sins of the tongue, against which the most awful judgments are threatened. Profanity of speech, or an idle, light, or irreverent use of the name of God, is so offensive, that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Avoid, also, every species of falsehood and deceit, of fraud and dishonesty; for every thing you do, and every thing you say is known to God. No darkness, no secret place, can conceal you from his sight. At the final day of judgment you will be called to answer for every idle word, for every sinful thought, and for every wicked deed: and, as the eternal welfare of your souls must depend upon the account which you then render, I beseech you to remember your Creator, now, in the days of your youth.

You are now young; but you are

advancing rapidly into life. In a few years you will be able better to estimate, not only your privileges, but your responsibility. You will then be called upon to ratify and confirm your baptismal vows, and to devote yourselves, your souls and bodies, to the service of God. And I earnestly pray that you may not shrink from this great and interesting duty; but that you may enter into the solemn engagements required in the ordinance of confirmation, with such sincere penitence for your sins, and such a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as to be enabled to look to his merits alone for the hope of salvation.

And now, to conclude, let me warn you against every device which may be designed or calculated to draw you away from the Church to which you are united by the holy rite of baptism. Remember by whom the Church was established; by whom its sacraments were ordained; by whom its ministry was appointed; and who promises to be with it to the end of the world, and, finally, to be its Head and High-Priest for ever. Let nothing alienate you from this Church: let no persuasion induce you to relinquish its regular and beautiful order of worship, for any novel invention or unauthorized innovation of man.

And may God, for the sake of his only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, keep you under his almighty protection; may he enable you, through the blessed influences of his Holy Spirit, to serve him faithfully unto the end; and may he receive you at last into the arms of his mercy, and grant you the joys of his eternal kingdom.

I am, my dear children,
Your affectionate pastor,
H. CROSWELL.

October, 1817.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNAL.

*Constitution of the Episcopal Female
Common Prayer Book Society of
Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania.*

ARTICLE I.

THIS Society shall be called the
Episcopal Female Common Prayer

Book Society of Wilkesbarre. Its object shall be the distribution of the Book of Common Prayer in Wilkesbarre and its vicinity.

ARTICLE II.

Every lady paying the sum of Fifty Cents annually shall be considered as a member of this Society. The payment of Five Dollars, or more, at one time shall constitute a member for life.

ARTICLE III.

All life subscriptions, and donations of money, shall remain as a permanent fund, and shall be vested in such a manner as the Managers shall direct. The interest of which shall only be expended.

ARTICLE IV.

Section 1. The business of this Society shall be conducted by a Board of Managers, (residing in Wilkesbarre,) consisting of a Directress, Secretary, Treasurer, and nine Managers, to be chosen by a majority of the members present at the annual meeting.

Sec. 2. The annual meeting of the Society shall be held on the first Monday in July.

Sec. 3. The Board of Managers shall meet as soon after the election as possible, and at such other times as they may appoint. Five members shall constitute a quorum; provided, nevertheless, that one or more attending the place of meeting regularly called, may adjourn.

Sec. 4. The Board of Managers shall make all laws necessary for the government of the Society; and shall cause a report of their proceedings to be laid before the Society at their annual meeting.

Sec. 5. All vacancies in the Board, between the stated meetings of the Society, may be supplied by the Board.

ARTICLE V.

This Constitution shall not be altered except at the annual meeting of the Society, three-fourths of the members present consenting.

Mrs. HAINES, *Directress.*

Miss ELIZA BOWMAN, *Secretary.*

Miss RUTH ANN BUTTLER, *Treasurer.*

Managers.—Mrs. MARIA BETTLE, Miss CATHARINE WELLS, Miss ANN MARIA BOWMAN, Miss IRENE ROSS, Miss HARRIET DRAKE, Miss LOUISA CHAPMAN, Miss HANNAH SLOCUM, Miss NANCY FELL, Miss NANCY HANCOCK.

All donations of books, &c. will be gratefully received, and faithfully applied by the Society.

First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Episcopal Female Common Prayer Book Society of Wilkesbarre.

THE Board of Managers of the Wilkesbarre Female Common Prayer Book Society, on this their anniversary, beg leave to lay before them a very brief report of their proceedings during the past year. The feeble effort which they have been enabled to make in the important concern of advancing the interests of the Church, they fondly hope will be received with indulgence, when the infant state of the Episcopal Society in this vicinity is taken into consideration. When we reflect, that previous to the autumn of 1815 the Book of Common Prayer was almost unknown with us, and the admirable liturgy of our Church had *never* yet ascended from our altar, it will not be thought surprising that our means of doing good are still circumscribed.

The first meeting of the Wilkesbarre Female Common Prayer Book Society was held on the 7th of July, 1817, when it was composed of about 30 members; since which time it has greatly increased, and there is a happy prospect of its becoming still larger. The money collected at that meeting was immediately appropriated to the purchasing of Prayer Books: 52 were obtained from New-York, a number very inadequate to supply the demand, had not a small donation been previously received from the Society in Philadelphia. Daily applications are now made, which we deeply regret it is not in our power, at present, to satisfy; but when our next supply arrives, of which we are in constant expectation, we shall be happy to distribute

them to all those who feel a desire to join in the excellent service of our Church.

A large field still remains for our exertions; but while we regret that we have had it in our power to do so little, we enjoy the highest satisfaction that we have done all that we could: and if we are actuated by proper motives, we may humbly trust that he who condescended to accept the widow's mite, will graciously receive and bless this our imperfect endeavours to disseminate his truth.

By order of the Board,

ELIZA BOWMAN, *Sec'y.*
Wilkesbarre, July 6, 1818.

At the annual meeting of the Society the Rev. MANNING B. ROCHE performed divine service, and delivered a sermon from Matt. xvi. 18. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Extract from the Journal of the Proceedings of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia, which assembled at Winchester, on Tuesday, the 19th of May, 1818.

THE Committee, on the state of the Church, to whom was referred the resolution providing a secure and permanent depository of the Episcopal Fund, have, according to order, had the same under consideration, and beg leave to report,—

That, from the great extent of this Diocese, it has been deemed, by preceeding Conventions, highly expedient, if not indispensibly necessary to the welfare of the Church of Virginia, that the Bishop should be relieved from the confinement of parochial duties, in order that the benefits of the Episcopal ordinances may be thereby more promptly and widely diffused; that the desolate temples of religion may again hear the voice of our chief pastor within their long forsaken courts, and that his venerated authority and influence may be extended over the whole flock which it has pleased God to commit to his pious charge.

For this salutary and holy purpose the Standing Committee of the Diocese early recommended the establishment of a fund for the support of the Episcopate, and the Convention seconded their recommendation by various resolutions, which have been hitherto followed with imperfect success. Particular parishes have contributed their subscriptions towards the fund, with a zeal becoming its importance to the prosperity of the Church, while others have totally disregarded the appeal which has been made to their piety and liberality.

Your Committee cannot recommend the abandonment of a measure so fraught with common benefit, until every practicable effort for its accomplishment shall have failed. It is confidently believed, that the obstructions which have hitherto opposed its success, have arisen from a want of confidence in the means which had been devised for its attainment, rather than from an insensibility to its importance.

The resolution referred to the Committee, if adopted, will effectually secure to the fund that permanent character which should remove among the parishes the fear that the fruits of their liberality will be hereafter misapplied; among the first subscribers, the apprehension that their pious contributions will not be seconded in time by all their brethren; and in the Church, the belief that any delay, however protracted, can ultimately defeat the object of its piety.

A decision of the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized the legal existence, and its authority will protect the rights of the corporation, in which the resolution proposes to vest the Episcopal fund of this Diocese. The Committee would have recommended a more central depository, could one have been obtained under the sanction of law.

The resolutions of preceding Conventions have too sanguinely contemplated an immediate resort to the fund, for the object which it is designed to accomplish. Your Committee are of opinion that this should be deferred until the fund shall have been so enlarged as to provide for that ob-

ject by its annual revenue. They beg leave, therefore, to recommend to the Convention the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, That the annual contributions from Christ Church, in Alexandria, of one hundred dollars, for raising a fund for the support of the Bishop, which have now been paid or which may hereafter be received, together with all other sums which may be any where subscribed and collected for the same object, be vested in bank stock, under the direction of the Standing Committee of this Diocese, in the names of GEORGE DENEALE and JOHN MUNCASTER, Church Wardens of Christ Church, Fairfax Parish, Alexandria, and their successors, for the purpose aforesaid.

2. That, in aid of the Episcopal Fund, the several ministers of this Church do, in their respective congregations, at some fit season in each year, deliver an appropriate discourse, recommending the pious object of the fund, and thereafter make a collection, the amount of which they shall specially mention in their respective parochial reports.

3. That each minister do, at some convenient season of every year, visit one or more of the vacant parishes of this Diocese, or of the counties of this Commonwealth, wherein there is no parish, for the purpose of delivering a similar discourse, and of collecting, by personal applications, or otherwise, farther sums for the enlargement of the Episcopal Fund, of which visit and collections they shall respectively make a report at the succeeding Convention.

4. That no part of the Episcopal Fund shall be withdrawn for any purpose, until its annual interest shall suffice for the attainment of its object; and that, in the interim, it shall be the duty of the Standing Committee to see that its enlargement is hastened by the prompt conversion of its revenue into principal.

The said preamble and resolutions, being twice read, were, on questions severally put thereupon, agreed to by the Convention.

On motion of Mr. POWELL, the Com-

mittee of the whole Convention was discharged from the consideration of the resolutions thereto referred: and the said resolutions were then read a second time, and, on questions severally put, were agreed to by the Convention.

Mr. MERCER, from the Committee on the state of the Church, presented a farther report, which was read as follows:

The Committee on the state of the Church recommend to the Convention the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Secretary do annex to the Journals of the Convention the following list of the Clergy of the Diocese of Virginia, viz.

The Right Rev. RICHARD CHANNING MOORE, D. D. Bishop, and Rector of the Monumental Church, Richmond.

The Rev. BENJAMIN ALLEN, Jefferson county.

The Rev. THOMAS G. ALLEN, Dumfries Church, Dettingen Parish, Prince William.

The Rev. ALEXANDER BALMAIN, D. D. Frederick Parish, Winchester.

The Rev. HUGH C. BOGGS, Berkeley Parish, Spottsylvania.

The Rev. JOHN BRACKEN, D. D. Williamsburg.

The Rev. JOHN L. BRYAN, Berkeley county.

The Rev. JOHN BUCHANAN, D. D. Rector of Henrico Parish.

The Rev. ALFRED DASHIELL, Deacon, New-London.

The Rev. JOHN DUNN, Shelburn Parish, Loudoun county.

The Rev. GEORGE HALSON, residing near Norfolk.

The Rev. WILLIAM H. HART, Assistant Minister of Henrico Parish.

The Rev. ALEXANDER HAY, Antrim Parish, Halifax.

The Rev. THOMAS HORRELL, Berkeley county.

The Rev. WILLIAM KING, Augusta Parish, Staunton.

The Rev. GEORGE LEMON, Hamilton and Leeds Parishes, Fauquier.

The Rev. SAMUEL LOW, Christ Church, Norfolk Borough.

The Rev. EDWARD C. MCGUIRE, St. George's Parish, Fredericksburg.

The Rev. WILLIAM MEADE, Frederick Parish, Frederick county.

The Rev. JOHN MICKLEJOHN, Mecklenburg.

The Rev. OLIVER NORRIS, Christ Church, Alexandria.

The Rev. JOHN S. RAVENSCROFT, St. James's Parish, Mecklenburg.

The Rev. WILLIAM STEELE, Prince William.

The Rev. ANDREW SYME, Bristol Parish, Dinwiddie.

The Rev. WILLIAM H. WILMER, St. Paul's Church, Alexandria.

The Rev. JOHN WOODVILLE, St. Mark's Parish, Culpeper.

The Rev. JOHN P. BAUSMAN, Frederickville Parish, Albemarle.

The Rev. JOSEPH R. ANDRUS, St. Paul's Church, King George county.

And that the Secretary annex to the Journals of every succeeding Convention a list of the Clergy, with all alterations therein produced in the preceding year by ordinations, deaths, removals, suspensions and degradations.

The said resolution being twice read, was, on the question put thereupon, agreed to by the Convention.

Prayer Book and Homily Society of Maryland.

Baltimore, May 9.

At a meeting of the Clergy and Laity of the several Protestant Episcopal Churches in this city, convened last evening by public notification, at the Lecture-Room attached to St. Peter's Church, for the purpose of forming a Society to procure and distribute gratuitously the Book of Common Prayer, and Homilies in Tracts—a number attended, together with some other Clergymen, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather; when the Right Rev. Bishop KEMP being called to the chair, opened the proceedings by prayer to Almighty God for his direction and blessing. HUGH D. EVANS, Esq. being then appointed Secretary. The Constitution of a Society to be called the "*Prayer Book and Homily Society of Maryland*," after being debated by para-

graphs, was unanimously adopted:— by one clause of which the Bishop of the Diocese is, *ex-officio*, President; and by another, the Clergymen and Vestries of the different parishes and congregations in this Diocese, are requested to form auxiliary societies. After an election then held, the following gentlemen were appointed to conduct the said institution:—

Right Rev. Bishop KEMP, *President*.
 Rev. J. P. K. HENSHAW, } *Vice-Pre-*
 Rev. J. V. BARTOW, } *sidents*.
 Mr. HENRY BRICE, *Treasurer*.
 Mr. S. YOUNG, *Corresponding Sec'y*.
 Mr. R. H. MOALE, *Recording Sec'y*.
 Mr. JOSEPH ROBINSON, *Agent*.

Managers.—Rev. WM. E. WYATT,
 Hon. NICHOLAS BRICE, Dr. WM. DONALDSON,
 Dr. J. BAER, Mr. NOAH RIDGELY,
 Mr. ROBERT NELSON, Mr. JAMES BELT,
 H. D. EVANS, Esq.

The proceedings of the meeting were then closed by prayer from the Rev. Mr. HATCH, of Frederick.

Explanation and Defence of the Ritual Laws of the Jews, from the Introduction to the Book of Leviticus.

Extracted from D'OILEY'S and MANT'S Family Bible, the first and second Numbers of which are now ready for delivery by T. & J. SWORDS. The notes between brackets are added to the American Edition, selected and arranged by JOHN HENRY HOBART, D. D. Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New-York.

THE Book of Leviticus is so called, because it is chiefly employed in describing the sacrifices and services of the Tabernacle, to be performed by that holy order of men who were of the tribe of Levi, and in detailing the particulars which related to the discharge of the priestly office; the historical parts of this Book being extremely few. That Moses was the author of this Book is shown not only by the general arguments which prove him to have written the Pentateuch, but appears also from particular pas-

sages in other books of Scripture, in which this is expressly cited as his inspired work. The delivery of these Laws, it is supposed, was included in the space of one month.

The two main designs of the Jewish Law seem to have been to oppose the idolatry and false worship so universally prevalent in the heathen world, and to prefigure the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ, the promised Saviour. As to the former of these designs, many particular customs and usages are forbidden the Jewish nation, for the prohibition of which we can in no way account, except by taking them under this view of an intended opposition to the several superstitions of the Gentiles. The chief difficulty under which we labour in this matter, is, that we cannot determine what particular idolatrous customs were prevailing in the time of Moses; so vastly distant is the time, and so short the records of ancient nations.

The religious services prescribed in this Book are reducible to the following heads:

First, Sacrifices of different kinds. Though these were outward rites of religious service, yet did they carry with them their several meanings, which had relation to spiritual religion and worship, while the whole was a typical scheme, and a fit introduction to that more perfect dispensation of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, by whom all mankind were to receive full atonement with God, and be blessed with the more pure revelation of his perfect will and way of worship.

Secondly, Purifications from legal uncleannesses. These were a numerous and burdensome part of the Israelitish religion; but they were not intended to terminate in mere ritual observance: they were most aptly significant of many things tending to inward and substantial religion, such as reverence towards God's house, his worship, and all holy things appropriated to his service; they represented also the necessity of inward purity of heart, life, and principles; the difficulty of rooting out evil habits from the mind, and the danger of sinful affections in such as worship the true

God, and are related to him as his peculiar people. These and other such things were represented by the purifications of the Jewish Law, always with a view to the promised Redeemer, who was, in the most perfect manner, to cleanse us by his blood, enlighten us by his doctrine, and purify us by his Spirit.

Thirdly, Various solemn festivals. The exact and pompous observance of these was so far from being a needless and trivial institution, that they appear to have been exceedingly proper for preserving the whole nation in the practice of true religion. They were thankful commemorations of the most signal national mercies and deliverances; mercies that formed the foundation of all their blessings, peace, and prosperity, as an united church and people: and, by their constant attendance on these joyful solemnities, at so many stated times of the year, and at the one fixed place of national worship, the people went through those courses of pious service to God, and that intercourse of kindness, generosity, and charity towards each other, which tended to make them adhere to the religion of the true God, and to confirm them in the love of that constitution under which they lived, surrounded with the uncommon blessings of his providence.

If in parts of the Jewish Law we should meet with some directions, the utility of which should not be at first sight apparent to us, let us beware of setting up the conclusions of our own reason against the unbounded wisdom of God. A closer consideration of the subject will teach us humbly to acknowledge that all these institutions answered the purpose of exercising the Israelites in faith and obedience; of preserving them a distinct and separate people; and of training them by a peculiar mode of discipline, wisely suited to their habits, prejudices, and circumstances, for the reception of the new dispensation under the Messiah. It will teach us also, that many of those directions, which rashness and presumption sometimes censure as trifling, and as unworthy of the Divine attention, were specifi-

cally calculated to guard the people of Israel from being betrayed into particular modes of idolatry and wickedness prevalent in the nations amongst whom they were to dwell.

Besides the laws relating to religion delivered in this Book, there are civil and judicial laws, which appear, when rightly considered, to make the surest provision for the honour of the government and magistracy, to lay down most impartially the rights of the people, and to advance those degrees of charity, peaceableness, mutual love, and justice, which form the strongest cement of a happy society. *Pyle, Dr. Gray, Gisborne.*

[Some of the ritual laws were condescensions which the Lord deigned to show towards a people who had been long habituated to the customs of Egypt. Hence the majestic apparatus of the tabernacle, that multitude of sacrifices, those pompous ceremonies to which the patriarchs were strangers, and which formed part of the Jewish worship. Others were intended to give the Hebrews an insurmountable aversion for the barbarous rites and abominable superstitions of their neighbours. Hence those prohibitions against making their children pass through the fire, against stigmatizing themselves, against slashing their bodies with knives, or cutting their hair in a certain form, against eating near blood, against worshipping in the high places, or planting groves near the tabernacle, &c.—These laws were intended to fix lasting traces on their minds of the wonders which God had worked for them, to perpetuate, from generation to generation, the memory of these great events, and to evidence the truth of them to the whole earth, even down to our times. And this was the chief motive for instituting the redemption of the first-born, the offering of the firstfruits, and of most of their festivals, &c. &c. Those laws, like so many emblems and useful parables, contained, at the bottom, admirable instruction. Thus the necessity of so many precautions against legal pollutions, so many washings and outward purifications, intimated to them the still more binding

obligation of purity of heart.—Other laws were designed to attach the Hebrews to the land which God had given them; to make them love its products, and to extirpate for ever from their hearts any wish to return into Egypt. Hence those laws which prescribed the use of oil in their sacrifices, which Egypt does not produce, and of wine, which the Egyptians abhorred; hence the prohibition to eat the lamb or the kid boiled in milk, as those nations did that had not oil.—There are some laws besides, which seem to have been specially intended to serve for standing palpable proofs of the continual providence of God over his people, and of the divine mission of Moses. Such, among others, was the law, enacting that the lands should rest during the sabbatical year; a remarkable and singular law, and which could scarcely come into the legislator's mind by natural means. It must have been founded on the certainty he had, that every sixth year would produce abundantly enough for the three following. Without this, Moses would have run a risk of losing all his people by famine, and of drawing upon his memory public curses. Now from whom could this assurance come but from God? Can we conceive that Moses would have ventured to enact such a law, if he had been only a common legislator? But what would have been the height of madness in a politician, confined to worldly views, is an evidence that his commission was from heaven, and that the God whose servant he called himself continually watched over Israel.—The ritual laws of the Jews did not spring from caprice. They were positive laws, but yet founded in reason, and had each a particular motive, although the distance of so many ages prevents us from knowing them all.—But to these particular motives a general one must be added, which alone would be sufficient to justify the wisdom of these extraordinary institutions. They all tended to one common end, worthy of a great legislator. This end of his was, to insure the duration of his people, and the purity of their worship

against all the revolutions of time.—For this purpose it was necessary to attach the Hebrews very strongly to their religion; and this he did most effectually by the multitude of observances which he laid on them.—In order to attain more certainly to this end, it was necessary besides, to keep all the individuals of the nation closely united together, and separate from every other. Now what could more effectually do this, than those extraordinary observances, and various rites which differed from those of other nations, or were diametrically opposite to their customs?—By the observance of these rites, the Hebrews have formed, do form, and will form, until the accomplishment of the prophecies, a nation apart, and by this, in spite of their captivities, dispersions, and miseries, they triumph over time, whilst the most powerful and wisest nations have disappeared off the face of the earth. *Jews' Letters.*]

RECENTLY published by T. & J. SWORDS, "The Christian's Manual of Faith and Devotion: containing Dialogues and Prayers suited to the various Exercises of the Christian Life, and an Exhortation to Ejaculatory Prayer, with Forms of Ejaculatory and other Prayers. The second edition improved. To which are added a number of Additional Prayers."

Advertisement to the first Edition.

THE dialogues in this volume are selected and altered from a work, entitled "The Village Manual." In the revision of them, the Editor has made considerable alterations in the style, and has occasionally amplified the sentiments. It is the object of these dialogues to exhibit and enforce the various exercises, duties, and privileges of the Christian life; to awaken the careless; to excite the lukewarm; and to instruct and comfort the penitent believer.

The exhortation to ejaculatory prayer, with suitable forms of ejaculatory devotion, has been altered from an original treatise on this subject, recommended by Bishop HORNE, and the Rev. WILLIAM JONES, of Nayland; and their names are pledges for the soundness and the fervour of its devotional exercises.

The Editor thought that the various articles in this volume were admirably calculated to excite and cherish evangelical and fervent piety; and he has, therefore, felt himself gratified in the humble office

of compiling this Manual of Christian Faith and Devotion, and presenting it to the public.

J. H. HOBART.

New-York, May 28, 1814.

The Prayers from page 380 of this edition, to the end, have been taken from a late British work, entitled "A Century of Christian Prayers, on Faith, Hope, and Charity; with a Morning and Evening Devotion."

Feb. 1818.

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THE INSECT.

Poor Insect! what a little day
Of sunny bliss is thine!
And yet thou spread'st thy light wings gay,
And bid'st them, spreading, shine.
Thou humm'st thy short and busy tone,
Unmindful of the blast;
And careless, while 'tis burning noon,
How quick that noon be past.
A show'r would lay thy beauty low;
A dew of twilight be
The torrent of thy overthrow,
Thy storm of destiny.
Then spread thy little shining wing,
Hum on thy busy lay!
For *Man*, like *thee*, has but his spring;
Like *thine*, it fades away!

A Prayer for a Preparation for Eternity.

(From the Christian's Manual.)

LORD God Almighty, who hast ordained this life as a passage to the future, by confining our conversion to the time of our pilgrimage here, and reserving for hereafter the state of punishment and reward; vouchsafe me the assistance of thy grace, who still have an opportunity of reconciliation to thee, that I may so watch over all mine actions, and correct every deviation in my way to heaven, as neither to be surprised with my sins uncanceled, nor called away with my duties unperformed; but that, when my body descendeth to the grave, my soul may ascend to thee, and dwell for ever in those mansions of eternal felicity, which are prepared for all thy faithful servants, through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

The following curious Circumstance is recorded on a Tomb Stone at Green-Bay, in the Island of Jamaica.

"HERE lieth the body of H. GOODING, Esq. who departed this life at Port Royal, December 22, 1739, aged 80 years. He was born at Mount Pelo, in France, but left that kingdom for his religion, and came to settle in this island, where he was swallowed up in the great earthquake in 1692; but by Divine Providence was by another violent shock thrown up in the sea! which, at that time, ran mountains high; and miraculously saved himself by swimming, until, by force of the waves, he was driven near the land, where he was rescued from a watery grave by the crew of a small vessel, and again safely landed. He lived many years after in great reputation, beloved by all who knew him, and much lamented at his death. Peace to his manes."

New Stereotype editions, in large and small print, of the Book of Common Prayer, intended for the use of individuals, and for gratuitous distribution by societies, are now ready for delivery, at very reduced prices, at the store of T. & J. Swords, No. 160 Pearl-street, New-York.

Printed and published by T. & J. Swords, No. 160 Pearl-street, New-York, where Subscriptions for this Work will be received, at one dollar per annum, or 24 numbers.—*All Letters relative to this Journal must come free of Postage.*